

I am concerned about both the GPO and the WEP and believe that legislation or administrative action is necessary to address both issues.

There were very strong points supporting the creation of the GPO and the WEP almost 30 years ago. At a time when the Social Security Trust Fund was nearly bankrupt, policymakers were looking at different areas of reform, especially due to long-standing fairness concerns. While Social Security spousal benefits were created to help financially-dependent spouses who did not have pensions of their own, such spousal benefits were not intended for spouses who received their own retirement provisions. That is why Social Security benefits that a person receives as a spouse are reduced dollar-for-dollar if that person also receives Social Security benefits on their own. The GPO was enacted into law applying a similar rule, such that Social Security benefits that a person receives as a spouse are reduced if that person also receives a federal, state, or local government pension based on work that was not covered by Social Security. The WEP reduces the Social Security benefits of workers who also have pension benefits from employment not covered by Social Security. Its purpose was intended to remove an advantage inherent in Social Security's benefit formula that favors workers with smaller amounts of Social Security-covered career earnings.

Yet, in looking at how the GPO and the WEP have been affecting retirees, I believe both provisions are unfair, especially so since those affected by the WEP and the GPO often are given little forewarning that those provisions apply to them until they are almost of retirement age and do not have a lot of lead time for retirement planning. At the very least, those that have contributed to the Social Security system ought to get back what they contributed to the system before they moved into public, non-Social Security-covered jobs. At the very most, the GPO and the WEP should be reformed, if not repealed.

I have read H.R. 82, a bill that would repeal the GPO and the WEP, and I have joined more than 280 members of Congress in cosponsoring this bill. Given that this bill has been introduced in previous Congresses and has not been enacted into law, probably because of the great costs its passage might have on the Social Security Trust Fund (at least \$70 billion over 10 years), I am also looking at other legislative options to lessen the effects of the GPO and the WEP on public retirees.